**REFLECTION: MARY IN THE GOSPEL – BY GIOVANI BIGOTTO.**

**Mary, the first one:** Let us pause and bring to mind how Mary was the child offered to her, Jesus the Lord. Perhaps we may discover she went before us.

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

**She was the first one to be evangelized:** By the good news announced by the angel Gabriel. She was the first one to make this child the centre of her life, the first one to hear is name, the first to repeat it over and over in those spontaneous longings that any mother whispers to the infant she carries in her womb. Devotion to the name of Jesus sprang from her lips.

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

**She was the first one to say Yes to Jesus:** Her yes was a prelude to an endless series of yeses, starting whit Joseph’s yes, Peter’s, the beloved disciple’s, a yes that was to have ripple effect from generation to generation, through centuries, and across all nations, tongues and cultures, touching our hearts and evoking our yes today. As the hymn goes, *“The price of your love remains hidden in our harvest forever.”*

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

**Mary is the one through whom Jesus came to experience** the sweetness of being loved in his humanity. To be loved was the first human experience of Jesus. She embraced him in maternal love; through her, our humanity offered to the Son of God the dearest love it possessed, the love of a very young mother. Jesus knew that love of his disciples.

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

**Mary is also the first missionary**. She hastened from Nazareth to Ain Kari, carrying Jesus along man-made roads to the family of the Baptist. Through Elizabeth, this family proclaimed the first total profession of Christian faith, acknowledging the Son of Mary as *the Lord* – or rather, *“My Lord”.* All true Christians address Jesus in this way, “Your are my Lord” Mary’s steps foreshadowed those of Peter, Paul, Francis Xavier, Albert Schweitzer and all the others who, carrying Jesus in their hearts, have witnessed to Christ. Missionaries of yesterday, of today or of tomorrow, all follow in the step of the young Mother of Jesus.

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

**Mary was the first to take care of her Son**, as soon as he was born. “She gave birth to her first-born, swaddled him and laid him in a manger” (Lk 2,7). She was the first person to love God in a human form.

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

**She was the first one to keep in her heart all that was said about her Son:** “As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Lk 2,19). Mary is a pure anticipation of the church, who also keeps the word of God in its heart, and prayers and meditation.

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

**Mary was the first one to in the shadow of the suffer cross:** “Look, he is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is opposed, and a sword will pierce your soul too” (Lk 2, 34-35). To be chosen to share in the passion or her son, what an honour! That shadow falls upon every Christian, but Mary was the first one touched in that way. Thus, Mary, who shares her Son’s blessing, also participates in his sufferings and death.

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

**She was the first one to be welcomed** into the home of the beloved disciple, making it her home and her family.

It goes without saying that Mary is the first and greatest witness of the incarnation, birth and death of Jesus. She was present throughout the human life of Jesus. She was present throughout the human life of Jesus, and is the greatest witness to his humanity.

(Prayer one Hail Mary)

 \*. O Mother, you know the sufferings
 and hopes of the Church and the world:
come to the aid of your children in the daily trials
which life brings to each one,
and grant that, thanks to the efforts of all,
the darkness will not prevail over the light.
To you, Dawn of Salvation, we commit
our journey through the new Millennium,
so that with you as guide
all people may know Christ,
the light of the world and its only Saviour,
who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit
forever and ever. Amen.